

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

# Carrollton Nike Park Canoe/Kayak Launch Final Report



PEP 17-05 | September 2017  
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**Virginia Coastal Zone**  
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



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# **CARROLLTON NIKE PARK CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH FINAL REPORT**

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**The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the  
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**Prepared by the staff of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission**



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**ABSTRACT**

This report documents the construction of a canoe and kayak launch in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, at the Carrollton Nike Park. Carrollton Nike Park is located at 13036 Nike Park Road, Carrollton, Virginia. This project was a joint effort of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and Isle of Wight County. The launch was completed in June 2017.

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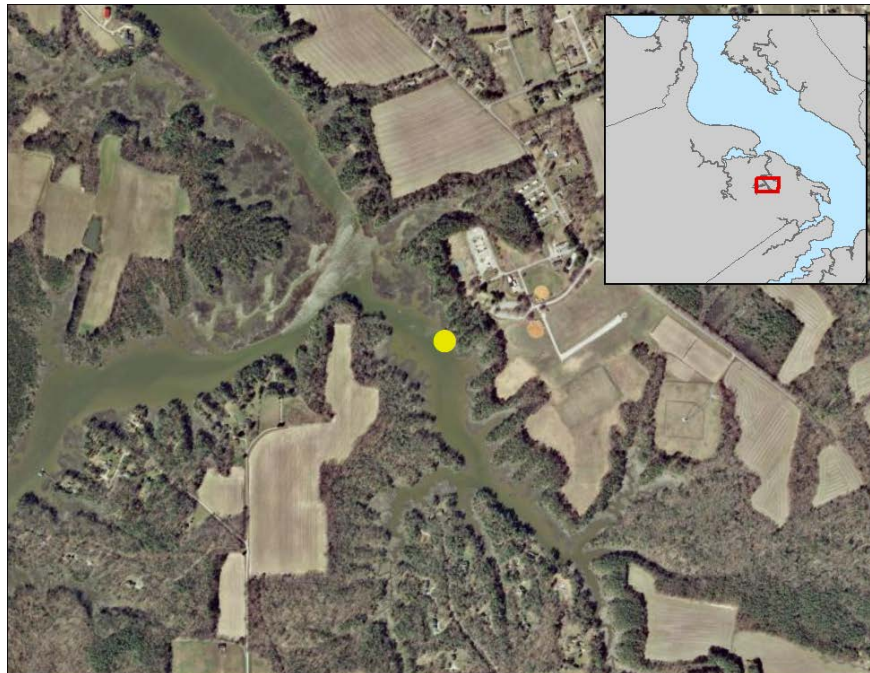
## Introduction

Isle of Wight County, located in the Western Tidewater area of Hampton Roads, is a rural county with a total population of approximately 29,000 and a total land area of approximately 319 square miles. Compared to its neighbors to the east, the county has more topography and less waterfront area. The county is bordered by Surry County to the northwest, Franklin (city) and Southampton County to the west, Suffolk to the southeast, and the James River to the northeast. The largest body of water in the county is the Pagan River, a tributary of the James River. Two of its tributaries, Cypress Creek and Jones Creek, also provide significant access to the water for the northern part of the county.

Isle of Wight County is one of the oldest communities in Virginia. The county was first settled by English colonists in the decades after the founding of Jamestown in 1607. It was originally known as Warrosquyoake Shire, one of the eight shires of Virginia, and was renamed Isle of Wight County in 1634.<sup>1</sup>

The new canoe and kayak launch is located in Carrollton Nike Park, an Isle of Wight County park located on Jones Creek in the northern part of the county near the town of Smithfield (see Figure 1). Nike Park is accessed via Nike Park Road/VA-669. Nike Park takes its name from the site's previous use as a Nike anti-aircraft missile launch site. Carrollton Nike Park is the county's largest recreational facility at 150 acres, about 90 acres of which have been developed for recreational use.

**Figure 1: Location of Nike Park Project in Isle of Wight County, Virginia**



<sup>1</sup> Isle of Wight County. "About Us." Isle of Wight County, VA. <http://www.co.isle-of-wight.va.us/about-us/>



Prior to installation of the new launch, the site featured a pier and landing. These amenities were used for shore fishing and crabbing. The original pier and landing were damaged during Hurricane Irene in 2011. They were partially restored following the storm. This project returns the facility to its full capacity. Figures 2-4 document existing conditions on the site prior to construction.

**Figure 2: Nike Park Pier and Landing, Pre-Construction**



Credit: Mark Furlo/Isle of Wight County

**Figure 3: Nike Park Pier and Landing, Pre-Construction**



Credit: Mark Furlo/Isle of Wight County

**Figure 4: Nike Park Landing, Pre-Construction**



Credit: Mark Furlo/Isle of Wight County

## Project Beneficiaries

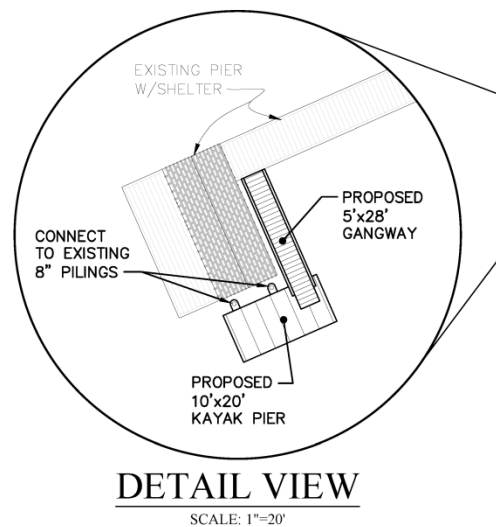
No residents live within one-quarter mile of the project site, but approximately 80 live within one mile of the site. In addition, approximately 12,000 residents live within a ten-minute drive of the site. According to the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization, 9,638 people lived in the neighborhoods within a half-mile of the project site in 2009. By 2040, that population is expected to increase to 16,990 an increase of approximately 76.3%.<sup>2</sup> In addition to those living relatively nearby, the project will also provide benefits region-wide by expanding access to Jones Creek, the Pagan River, and the James River for Hampton Roads visitors and residents.

## Project Context

In 2015, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) applied for and obtained funding through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program to work with Isle of Wight County on the design and construction of the Carrollton Nike Park Canoe/Kayak Launch. The project included the planning, design, acquisition, and construction of the following components (see Figure 5):

- Modifications to the existing shelter/landing and pier
- Installation of a new canoe/kayak launch/pier
- Installation of a gangway connecting the existing pier to the canoe/kayak launch/pier

**Figure 5: Diagram of Existing Assets and Proposed Project**



Source: Isle of Wight County

This project helps to implement Isle of Wight County's master plans for its parks and recreation facilities. Specifically, the Carrollton Nike Park Master Plan calls for the installation of a second pier to the one

<sup>2</sup> Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization, Hampton Roads 2040 Socioeconomic Forecast and TAZ Allocation, October 2013



currently in place and for the improvement of access to the water.<sup>3</sup> Isle of Wight County's comprehensive plan includes a separate chapter on parks, recreation, and open space. One of the objectives stated in the plan is to "provide adequate public waterfront access and develop facilities for swimming, boating, and fishing activities for current future residents."<sup>4</sup>

## Project Description

The completed Carrollton Nike Park canoe/kayak launch fulfills the county's original goal of having a comprehensive water access point in the park. The project takes advantage of the pier and structure constructed post-Hurricane Irene to create a single point of access for fishing, crabbing, sight-seeing, canoeing, and kayaking. The launch provides easy, ADA-compliant access directly to Jones Creek. In addition, the type of launch selected for the project was designed to move with water as conditions change, which should help make the project more resilient to coastal hazards such as storm surge. The project included modification of the existing pier to allow the installation of the new gangway, installation of the gangway, and installation of the canoe/kayak floating dock and launch. This project will provide access for the many users of Carrollton Nike Park from Isle of Wight County and other communities in Hampton Roads. Figures 6 - 10 show the completed project.

**Figure 6: View of the completed gangway and launch**



Credit: Meg Pittenger

<sup>3</sup> Isle of Wight County, *Carrollton Nike Park and Heritage Park Master Plans* <http://www.co.isle-of-wight.va.us/parks-and-recreation/download/Nike%20Park%20Master%20Plan.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Isle of Wight County, *Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Comprehensive Plan*, October 2008

Figure 7: View of the completed gangway and launch from the pier



Credit: Meg Pittenger

Figure 8: View of the pier, landing, and completed launch from the river



Credit: Meg Pittenger



**Figure 9: View of the completed project from the pier, including signage**



Credit: Ben McFarlane/HRPDC

**Figure 10: View of the completed launch**



Credit: Ben McFarlane/HRPDC



**Figure 11: Signage on the Pier and Landing**



Credit: Meg Pittenger

**Figure 12: Signage at the Pier Entrance**



Credit: Meg Pittenger

## Process

The planning and approval process for this project originally began over a year prior to the grant being awarded. The final contract between the HRPDC and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program was fully executed on September 29, 2015.

- Isle of Wight County originally began soliciting information from potential contractors for the dock and launch in 2013.
- A permit modification for the launch platform and gangway was received from the Virginia Marine Resources commission on April 15, 2014, with an expiration date of April 29, 2016 (VMRC permit #13-0206). In March 2016, the county requested an extinction of the permit. Permission was granted by VMRC on April 20, 2016, which extended the permit until April 30, 2019.
- A determination of no adverse effect was received from the Department of Historic Resources on September 4, 2015.
- Complications with the title opinion delayed final execution of the contract and approval of the grant. The final title opinion, which determined that the easements on the park site would not interfere with the project, was obtained on November 10, 2016.
- The final 306a checklist was submitted to the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program on February 8, 2017.
- A Memorandum of Agreement between the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and Isle of Wight County was executed on April 20, 2017.
- Isle of Wight County requisitioned the launch from Affordable Floating Dock, Inc., on May 11, 2017.
- Construction and installation of the launch began on June 26, 2018, and was completed on June 27, 2017.
- The new launch was officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 1, 2017.

Overall, Isle of Wight County committed over 300 staff hours to this project.

## Conclusion

The Carrollton Nike Park Canoe/Kayak Launch project helps fulfill the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program's goal to "improve public access to coastal waters and shorefront lands" in a manner that is "compatible with resource protection goals." By providing a structured access point, the new launch will both increase the capacity of Carrollton Nike Park to serve as an access point to Isle of Wight County's tidal rivers and will reduce the impact of visitors and users to the surrounding shorelines. In addition, the project will improve access for visitors and residents of the Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth to this part of the James River watershed. The funding received for this project from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program was a major contributor to its overall success.